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SERVANTS.

WHEN three or four ladies of the middle class meet together, and have a long semi-confidential chat, whatever subjects they skim over or dip into, the standing dish of their conversation is 'Servants.' It is both safe and common ground. Women must be very intimate, or very silly, or both, to discuss 'husbands.' No doubt, there is a tempting traitorous flavour about this topic which enables a wife to take a theoretical revenge for offences small or otherwise; but still, however slighted she may be, a wise woman feels that it is a nice and delicate process, requiring infinite skill, to chastise her other half effectually when her own share of the whole is alone present. He, the offending half, is comfortably reading the paper at his club, or grinding at his office, or out in the fields; but wherever he may be, he is profoundly unconscious of the whipping which is laid on him at home, both while it is being administered, and after it is over. Neither she nor her confidante tells him a word about it, for one of the conditions of the revelation is silence. Thus, if a sensitive woman has been drawn into confidential complaints about her husband to another, the result is generally no relief, but an uncomfortable suspicion that she has bared herself to fresh pain. Depend upon it, suffering wives mostly hold their tongues. Then, again, it is impossible to get real sympathy in the troubles of marriage from unmarried women. Maids' husbands are perfect. The subject of children, moreover, is a restricted one. Doting mothers are indifferent to the praises of other babies, and complaints about children want the spice of treachery which gives a whet to those about husbands. The essence of most piquant confidence is evil. Your genuine tattler seldom cares to speak or hear good about any one. Even harmless chat is generally languid except some person be discussed and blamed. There must be some subject in which all are interested, and about which all can complain. True, maids and childless wives can sit in judgment on their neighbours and acquaintances, but there is need of much caution

in this indulgence, for friends are sometimes defended behind their backs, and slanderers are occasionally stung themselves.

But 'servants' are safe and common ground. Your conversation is both personal and querulous, and yet there is no accompanying sense of humiliation. You have not to bewail an inseparable tie; indeed, the consciousness of being able to dismiss the offender makes a sort of background of magnanimity to your sufferings. You seem to bear and forbear. When you say that you do not think you can put up with Martha's carelessness or impudence any longer, you hint at the consideration and gentleness you have shewn yourself. 'Will you believe it? She actually,' &c. 'No, really? Well, I always,' &c.

In fact, there are no good old-fashioned servants left—the race has perished. Mind you, I am not now speaking in the person of one of the lady-interlocutors at a social palaver, but I am summing up their conclusions. The race of old-fashioned, faithful, devoted servants has perished. What with their caps, and their airs, and their letters, and their hoops, you can't get a housemaid or a cook fit for her work. Is it not written in the papers? Is it not drawn in *Punch*? Is it not true?

Not altogether. I will leave out of the question those cherished examples of fidelity, those 'perfect treasures,' who are the foil to the defects of their class, the exceptions which are supposed to prove the rule of disobedience and incompetency, and attempt a little examination of the great social complaint, 'there are no good servants now.' I will consider the case of those who owe no hereditary attachment to a family, but come as strangers to those whom they know not, well recommended, indeed, with respectable characters, but received into a household after written correspondence, or a personal interview with some responsible lady, who is also generally a stranger to the new mistress.

I am willing to grant, though in so doing I do not admit the justice of the common complaint, that the old race of servants has passed away. You can no longer get, as a rule, the humble, long-

suffering, courtesy-bobbing maid, who looks up to a mistress as a being of another kind to herself. Primary education, imperfect as it still is in England, has put notions into the heads of poor children which their fathers and mothers never held, simply because they were never put into them. The education of masters and mistresses has not grown in proportion. They have learned a few more accomplishments, and perhaps affect a superiority to some duties which their predecessors performed, but they have not taken that immense stride which an illiterate class does when it learns to read and write. National schools, steel pens at a shilling a gross, cheap envelopes, penny postage, and popular literature, have introduced the whole class of respectable servants into that circle of social intercourse and sentiment which fifty years ago belonged almost exclusively to their masters and mistresses. When you have once learned to read and write with pleasure and facility, you have gained ground on which the most cultivated people must be content to walk. I do not overlook distinction of ranks in saying this—they will always be strong and prevail. A man who inherits a name or a position has a real advantage over him who has to gain either of them. But still, the removal of the bar of illiterate ignorance between master and servant, brings them, by a stroke of the pen, into the same great field of social intercourse. They may make very different uses of their common privilege, but the sense of inferior-class isolation is marvellously diminished, sometimes destroyed, by its possession; indeed, the weak or ill-trained mind is likely to be puffed up above measure by its discovery of the magic of the commonest literature. There is real ground for the pig-headed farmer's growl at schools. He cannot get the same ploughmen and dairy-maids that his father and grandfather did. He wants serfs or slaves, who know no letter but his word, and have easy access to no thoughts but his will. His yardman's boy, who passes Standard Four or Five when the government-school inspector makes his annual visit, will not feed the pigs with the same dull sympathy that his father Hodge did when he was a child. The 'darned brat' has had the seeds of some knowledge about Australia, money-matters, and grammar sown in him. He has been up to London by an excursion-train, and sings a second treble in the new-fangled choir. He certainly does not take to carrying hog's wash and bird-keeping as his progenitors did. There is still many a farmer of the old sort who is angrily conscious that though his voice may be loud, his waistcoat big, his beer strong, and his agricultural instincts quick enough to get fair crops off his land, yet that little Hodge could beat him in book-learning; and so he sings bass to the great chorus of complaint that there are no good servants now a days—not such as there used to be. I grant this last note of his lament. The class of farm-servants is changed—but he is the same.

Let us now return to the lady who cannot find

the hitherto traditional maid. What education does for the boy, in whom its finer lessons are blunted by rough field-work, it does with still more striking result in the girl, whose new notions are encouraged by residence in a gentleman's family. Her ideas of refinement do not, I believe, give her a distaste to household work, for there is an instinct of cleanliness and small order in most women's minds, which education develops rather than weakens; but as far as she is educated, the modern maid perceives and resents with quicker perception that tone of curt exaction from her own sex by which so many mistresses try to establish their authority. Some who pass unchallenged as 'ladies' in general society, address and direct their servants with a peremptory air, of which probably they are themselves unconscious. There is a traditional style of speaking to servants which comes down from the days in which Great Britain was a slave-owning country. Orders are often given, not with distinctness and precision, which are never offensive, but with a sharpness, if not snappishness, which is thoughtlessly supposed to suit the communication, but which the intelligent servant feels to be needless, if not wanton. Why should not a lady speak to her maids as she does to any one else? Indeed, when we think what is required of servants, there is the more reason why we should always direct them courteously, especially when we consider how their sharpness and sense of refinement have been quickened by even such education as they now possess. You expect them to think; it is one chief item of complaint against them that they are thoughtless, and yet they must be ready to respond to the pull of the bell-wire as if they were machines. Did you, madam, ever try to realise what it is to be rung for throughout the whole day? You may be fully interested in some work for the house, or some lawful occupation of your own, or being very tired, you are sitting down for a few minutes' simple rest, when the bell over your head jerks out its pert, peremptory summons. You check yourself in full swing of what you are about, and have to do so a dozen or twenty times at irregular intervals between morning and night.

Remember, too, that you may have to carry on your work thus intermittently day after day, week after week, month after month. Then Cook, your friend, is dismissed. A total stranger to you takes her place, shares your bedroom, perhaps your bed. You are not consulted or thought of in the least. You are expected to be always ready, always obliging and respectful, whatever in your heart you think about your employer. You have no room which you can securely call your own; no time which you can safely depend on for your own business. At any moment you may receive a visit or a summons from your mistress. You are scolded when you forget anything, or make a mistake, or an omission. You are seldom or never thanked, though you are conscious that the whole comfort and safety of the house are at the disposal of its servants. It is true that, if you dislike your

situation, you may give warning without assigning any reasons; but if you are intelligent and useful, you know how ill your natural desire is received, how inconsiderate you are thought to be, how coldly you are dismissed, how ungraciously your good character is admitted.

Now, madam, pardon me if I ask you to try and realise the position of a servant, such as it often is. I know that there are many kind mistresses; I know that there are few designedly hard upon their servants; but are there not many careless and ungracious? In fact, do they not often seem to believe that they may shew as much curtness as they please without being answered again? Do they not sometimes expect that servants should take an interest in their work, while they themselves take no interest in their servants? Or, perhaps, they only require obedience, thoughtfulness, civility, honesty, &c. in return for wages. The cardinal virtues for sixteen pounds a year and the lees of the parlour tea-pot!

If you want attached servants, be an attached mistress. Let your thoughtfulness shew itself in little things. Speak courteously, not curtly. Spare them trouble, and thank them for the courtesy they shew to you. Be considerate, but not intrusive. Recognise the fact, that servants must have some interests of their own, some occupation which affords a relief from the constant strain of service; and do not pry too closely into their concerns, or arrange too minutely the order in which they are to get through their business. There must, of course, be some general principle of procedure; but a household in which everything, down to the least detail of domestic duty, is done by 'clock-work,' cannot be expected to produce much beside living machinery. Children must often be thus drilled; but intelligent men and women resent minute supervision, which checks the play of that confidence which is needed to create a feeling of attachment between a mistress and her servants. It leaves no room for trust and thoughtfulness to grow up. You can get nothing but what you give. You must make friends of your servants, if you expect them to care for you; and by making friends of them I do not mean to advise the assumption of a tone of familiarity, which breeds contempt, but that appeal to good feeling and honour which is at once gratifying and respectful. Where mistresses are inquisitive and suspicious, peering into every corner with pointed incredulity, and guarding the loose material of domestic use with lock and key, a dishonest servant deliberately arrays her wits against those of her mistress, and throws upon her the *onus probandi* of shirking and pilfering; while an honest one is incessantly chafed with the consciousness that her honesty is superfluous, and either loses her high moral tone, or shuts herself up in herself, with civil tacit resentment. A good mistress sees into the holes and corners of her establishment without seeming to see them; and by the confidence with which she permits access to the floating household properties in daily use, wins the respect and gratitude of the honest, while she does more to disarm the inquisitive and greedy, than she could by the most stringent wardship. Even the honest do not feel themselves so scrupulously responsible for the guardianship and economy of odds and ends if the owner affects to protect them with significant caution. Where the

sideboard is unlocked, one good servant will check the tendencies of a bad one with far surer and more wholesome effect than any precautions on the part of the mistress. But where a system based upon mistrust prevails, the mistress is left to be her own custodian.

I am quite sure that no one would have to complain of servants if they would both bear in mind the sensitiveness which is already produced by the improved education of the class from which they are taken, and, while they carefully avoid the peremptory tone of command which is too common, trust them more. Many a well-intentioned lady, moreover, keeps up a spirit of small but chronic resentment in her household by supervision in those matters which lie outside the covenant between mistress and servant. Servants, for example, should never be compelled to do their shopping and see their friends on the sly. Let them have the privilege of entertaining some of their acquaintances, and going out to do their own inevitable business. Arrange, if possible, for your servants to have a party of their own friends some day when you are away from home yourself. When you are absent for a time, bring back some little present; not an offensively good book, but such a knick-knack as is decorative rather than severely useful. Do not be too censorious about bonnets and hoops. Rather give your maid some article of dress which is dainty, and yet becoming, and thus win her confidence, by assuming the righteousness of a certain amount of personal self-respect. Meet the inevitable weaknesses of youth, good looks and high spirits, half-way, and let your own good taste and better cultivation lead them aright. Do not sniff at them, and send them off at a tangent, thus possibly driving them into defiant and outrageous extremes. Above all, be courteous. Do not claim as a prerogative of gentility to speak sharply to those who are required to answer you with respect. It seems to me that servants are sometimes expected to be the most gentle in the household, and to keep rules of politeness which their betters are exempted from observing. If you treat your equal with courtesy, who is privileged to resent an impertinence, how much more cautious should you be in your tone towards those from whom you demand a respectful demeanour.

What I have said applies to those households in which the mistress is her own housekeeper, and in which, spite of the chorus of complaints about the degeneracy of modern servants, I have myself been happy in seeing much genuine good feeling and mutual respect. I hear of many defects—I read of and disbelieve them. They are not inevitable; they are created by the mistress as much as by the maid. Let the former be considerate and truthful, after the fashion I have ventured to suggest, and she will have no cause to complain of the latter. Some day, possibly, I may suffer from overconfidence, but hitherto, with the experience of a good many years both in London and in the country, I have never had any serious trouble with servants at all. Some have been better than others; I have had a good many, but I have never repented the leaving of almost everything open or unlocked. When I have been ill or worried, I have been most grateful for the extreme kindness and consideration I have always received from them. The old race of human spaniels has indeed passed away, but I am sure that masters and mistresses would

find that a much better one has come in its place, if they would but accept the change.

In the case of large establishments, where the servants' hall forms a society quite distinct from the drawing-room, the head directing the economy of the whole through a housekeeper or steward, much of what I have said is addressed to the head servants rather than to the master or mistress. I believe that respectable common domestics prefer service in a house of the middle class rather than in one of the highest. Many great people who perhaps take a leading part in the 'philanthropical world,' would be horrified at the tone and doings of the life below stairs in their own houses. My profession has brought me into contact with servants, who have told me facts about the conduct of some great establishments which I will not repeat. A servants' hall in many a house highly reputed of is a sink of iniquity. There is no fellow-feeling good or bad between the head and the tail. The joints in the tail are cut off or put in without the perception of the head, who probably does not know the names or the faces of the lowest circle in his or her service. Two or three chief servants manage everything beneath them, and stop effectually any movement of interest upwards or downwards. They are walls which divide the household, middle terms who do not mediate between the higher and the lower, thus exhibiting a process precisely opposite and antagonistic to the great Christian economy, in which we learn that the office and charm of stewardship is to bring the weakest into contact with the strongest, and to teach the servant of the great Lord that the Master is as good and wise as he is rich and powerful.

LADY FLAVIA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'LORD LYNN'S WIFE.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.—A LEGAL ALNASCHAR.

'THIS is all very fine, my pet, but it is not what we came out from England for. The real object, the discovery of your school-friend, Amy, seems as far off as ever,' said Colonel Ford, in a very discontented tone, as he pushed back the burning logs that threatened to roll off the raised hearth-stone, and invade the polished floor of smooth dark marquetry, glassy and glossy, but deathly cold in that biting French winter weather. And indeed the colonel had some reason for his remark. He, who had ruled provinces, and had given the law to myriads of martial barbarians, found himself and his daughter mere puppets in the hands of one immeasurably his inferior in all respects but dexterity. The Procureur Impérial, who viewed law as conquerors view war, as a game of chess where human lives are the pawns, considered the Fords, the Roystons, and the others involved in this very promising case, as so many stepping-stones in his own progress to fame and fortune. He had not the slightest thought of allowing mercy to temper justice, a notion which he would have stigmatised as Utopian, and only worthy of those 'ideologues' for whom Napoleon I. had so sincere a contempt.

The Procureur Impérial meant that there should be no drawing back upon the road, no halt, no

change of purpose, no slackening for pity, or fear, or disgust. Of what use was it that so much trouble should have been taken, unless the trumpet of renown should blazon forth the name of M. Duvillers-Hardouin as a man worthy of all the favours of Themis! He was an officer of the Legion of Honour already; he wanted the cross of a Commander. He was Procureur Impérial in a department that was close to Paris; he panted to be Procureur Général, Judge, President, Senator, in Paris itself. He had been near the rose long enough; he longed to be the rose.

No wonder that when the Fords, disappointed in their hopes of finding some clue to the whereabouts of the true Lady Flavia Clare, of that school-companion of Amy's who, as they fully believed, had been ousted from her place in the world, as by witchcraft, in favour of another—no wonder that when they spoke of withdrawing from the affair, the way of their retreat was barred. Not that M. Duvillers-Hardouin was capable of giving offence. He contented himself with artfully appealing to the colonel's ideas of discipline, duty, and so forth; and with throwing out dark hints that Miss Ford might perhaps be renouncing the only chance of preserving the life or the reason of her unhappy friend, now no doubt a captive in unscrupulous hands, and whose main hope must be in the devotion of her adopted sister.

Meanwhile, the Judge of Instruction, polite but peremptory, hinted that the laws of France admitted of no indulgence of private caprice. Heavy bail was exacted, he said, from those witnesses who were supposed reluctant to appear in court in criminal cases. In this instance, the well-known honour and distinction of M. le Colonel Ford would render such a proposition insulting; a simple *parole* would suffice. It was the judge's duty to ask it; would the colonel give it? The colonel gave it, and was bound.

In the meantime the great mill of examinations, inquiries, interrogatories, of questioning, writing, browbeating, cajoling, and other time-honoured methods of wire-drawing the evidence, had not been suffered to stand idle. Basil Royston, who was in prison, and *au secret*, of course, was in process of being manipulated into a confession that should ruin others without saving himself; for the French authorities are not very fond of letting any of their trapped birds go when once they are caught. They do not bid so high for decoy-ducks as we do, and never purchase king's evidence when they can get it at the cheaper rate of a little judicious bullying. Mrs. Royston, also in prison, was also under the moral thumbscrew, being daily badgered by the Judge of Instruction; and Grosse Jeanne and La Petite had already been pumped dry of all available information, and were dismissed to their homes. But even these human oranges, squeezed as they had been till the last drop of testimony had been drained from them, were not held wholly free from the taint of suspicion. Their *livrets*—the little books which are to servants in France at once a passport and a character—were detained at the police-office; their parents had to give bail for their reappearance at the assizes; lastly, they were put under surveillance of the local constabulary, and were enjoined to present themselves twice a week at the *mairie* of their commune.

The Château des Roches had been searched

from cellar to *grenier*, and every scrap of written paper had been removed to the bureau of the police. The interpreters had ample employment in deciphering and explaining the contents of Brand Royston's old betting-books, and in translating the mass of hopelessly irrelevant letters from creditors, relations long dead or alienated, and other correspondents, that the agents had raked out from drawers and desks; but there was not a line that served their turn. The squire had been burning papers on the very afternoon of the day preceding his arrest and death. The heap of blackened tinder lay yet on the hearth in his bedroom, tantalising those who came to pry into the mystery that he seemed to have carried with him to his grave. Brand was in his grave now, in a lonely nook of the cemetery of Gésnez-Vignoble, where the few sleepers were such as had died in mortal sin, according to M. le Curé, and where not even a wooden cross marked the low mounds of brown earth.

But the Procureur Impérial sorrowed over the loss of so important a culprit, and found his day-dreams, in which he had seen this grand central figure, with his accomplices grouped about him, put to the bar in the assize court of Versailles, rudely dashed to the ground; for although Basil Royston was a prisoner, and to procure his condemnation to a certain term of *travaux forcés*, if not to the guillotine itself, might not be difficult, so poor a triumph was scarcely a subject of rejoicing. It was not the conviction and punishment of a wretched creature of this kind that would satisfy the public prosecutor; such a legal epicure as M. Duville-Hardouin hankered after daintier materials wherewith to furnish forth a pie fit for the Law's palate. The Procureur Impérial desired to grind down more delicate bones, in that grim official mill where men and women were crushed between the stones, whence fell the flour wherewith to make his bread, than the bones of the cashiered captain.

Even a lawyer, and a French lawyer, may build castles in the air, and M. Duville-Hardouin constructed several aerial edifices of this description; but it was remarkable that they were all reared on the same substratum. Some cruel old eastern despot, when he raised his monstrous palace, no cloud-castle, but a building of fair hewn stone, with courts and fountains, domes and minarets, chose to bury alive a beautiful young girl beneath the mountain of masonry; it would bring him luck, the tyrant thought. So in the airy structures of M. le Procureur, the foundation-stone always reposed on a victim; and that victim was a fair woman, as the old eastern king's had been; a lovely girl—he did not know *how* lovely; but then he had only Grosse Jeanne's description to guide him. He had heard her spoken of with a kind of dull grudging admiration, as a *belle brunette, ma foi! a joli minois*, with long black hair, that Grosse Jeanne could only liken to the hair of a pictured saint, whose portrait, by some student of Murillo's, formed the altar-piece in the church of her native village.

Clever, beautiful, and with the prestige of rank and wealth and refinement enwrapping her like a royal mantle, what would be the fame of the skilled legal sportsman whose arrows should bring down a bird of such glowing plumage as that! He saw her, with her dark beauty and her graceful

mien, the mark for every eye in the crowded court, and he gloated over the thrill of half-incredulous horror that ran through the shuddering spectators as he threw the pitiless light of truth upon the story of her past deeds. He saw her yet again—as her dark silken ringlets fell, one by one, beneath the scissors that the public executioner—that other prop and pillar of the state, who, in Bourbon times, was styled Monsieur of Paris—plied in that ill-boding ceremony that goes by the name of Toilette of the Condemned. He saw her yet again—on the scaffold, whose hateful planks are painted of a dusky red, that the stains of human blood may be less distinguishable, with the fatal knife of the guillotine, heavy and sharp, glittering above her slender neck, and the multitude hushed and speechless as the headman takes the cord in his hand, and the priest holds up the crucifix for the last time. But then M. Duville-Hardouin preferred to look away, for the public prosecutor was averse to seeing what might haunt him in his dreams.

Much had to be done, however, before Justice could be propitiated with such a tit-bit as the Procureur Impérial desired to offer up on her sacrificial altar; and the progress of affairs was inconveniently slow, as we shall learn from Charles Ford's lips when he reaches the *appartement* in which his betrothed and his uncle are waiting for his return. The young man bounds lightly upstairs, taking the carpetless steps by twos and threes, and lifting the queer old-world latch of the door, enters the little salon that had seen fine company in it once, all powder, patches, rouge, hoops, perfume, good manners, and bad principles; for though the lodging seemed small and inconvenient to the Fords, as it would to most of us modern Sybarites, it had harboured marchionesses and courtly abbés, more chevalier than priest, wits and beauties, seigneurs and financiers, of the old rotten splendid days when all things animate and inanimate in broad France were the king's absolute property, '*ses choses*,' as loyal lawyers declared.

'This sort of thing will never do,' said Charles Ford, in answer to the demand for news—'never do. I've been for hours hanging about the Palais, and I believe that no lost steps in the Salle des Pas Perdus were ever more thrown away than mine. It's plain, though the Procureur always speaks as enigmatically as if he had taken lessons at Delphi, that nothing can be made of that Captain Royston. They have him on the rack—metaphorically speaking—for about four hours a day; but whether fear has sharpened the fellow's wits, or whether his ravings were all a delusion, hang me if I can form an idea. And Mrs Royston is as close as an oyster. They don't like to tease her so much, because the doctor apprehends softening of the brain, poor creature; but to one thing she is firm—she won't say a word that can cause injury to her son.'

'I don't blame her for that,' said the colonel, tossing a fresh log on the fire.

'Nor I, of course,' said his nephew; 'but as for any certain tidings of Amy's friend, we seem as far off from getting them as ever. As a great favour, old Duville-Hardouin has let me peep at Grosse Jeanne the servant's deposition; and I can't help thinking that there is a person who could solve all our doubts, and set the matter at rest—Adela Burt.'

'Adela Burt?' said Amy, as if the name recalled no very distinct recollections—then suddenly she exclaimed: 'Dear me, yes. How stupid of me! Mrs Royston's niece, of course; and I assure you that I was foolish enough to be jealous, once upon a time, of Flavia's fancy for that very Adela Burt—school-girls are always unreasonable in such matters, you must know—and dear Flavia took what I said seriously to heart, and never mentioned Miss Burt's name again.'

'Did you ever see her?' asked Charles, sitting down by Amy's side.

'Adela Burt? never!' was the answer. 'But what makes you mix her up with the case at all? I thought she was gone, and that Grosse Jeanne said that Madame's niece had left France long ago.'

'Well, that's the wonder of the thing,' observed Charles musingly, as he eyed the fire. 'Grosse Jeanne says that on the day when Lady Flavia was staying at the château, the Thursday, you know, July the 10th—she did not see Lady Flavia at all. Your friend remained shut up in her own room, if the woman speaks truth, from bedtime on the Wednesday night until the morning of Friday, when she came down, closely veiled, and started by the diligence for Mantes. She was said to be ill, and Mrs Royston and this Adela Burt, the niece, waited on her, and did not allow a servant to enter the room at all; and Grosse Jeanne never exchanged a word with Lady Flavia, though she had expected a present from that young lady on leaving.'

'But Adela Burt?' said Amy.

'Well,' said Charles, 'it seems, from Grosse Jeanne's account, that during the early part of the Thursday there were high words going on between her master—that's Brand, poor wretch—and the captain and Miss Adela. There was a regular row; but though the maid-servant admits that her knowledge of English is greater than her employers supposed it to be, as is often the case abroad here, she says that her fear of the squire prevented her from approaching near enough to listen, as she wished to do. But at last the quarrel seemed to come to an end; and this Miss Burt seemed to get her own way in the dispute—so Grosse Jeanne said. But on Friday morning, when La Petite went into Miss Burt's room to make the bed, she found that the bed had not been slept in; and the family hunted in vain, and so did the servants, upstairs and downstairs, and in my lady's chamber, but never a trace of Miss Adela did they find. Probably she had borne malice on account of the quarrel of the previous day; or she may have feared injury from that old Royston, who was a violent man, as we all know. At any rate, the girl had run away; and she has never returned.'

The colonel knit his brows, and became more thoughtful than before. 'Charley, lad,' said he, 'I may be a suspicious old fellow, and perhaps I am, but two ideas came into my head as you were speaking. In the first place, it seems to me as if this niece, this Adela Burt, was the person that we ought to find. Her quarrel was very likely all a pretence—a mere blind to mislead the servants; and as for her departure in that secret fashion, how do we know that the running away was not prearranged? How do we know that Miss Burt had not appointed to meet her uncle somewhere, in England or in France and is not at this very

moment the guardian or jailer of your poor school-fellow, kept in durance somewhere or other—in a madhouse or any other den of iniquity?—In the second place,' pursued Colonel Ford, stroking his gray moustaches, 'the question arises, why should the Roystons play this dangerous game? For profit, of course. But how, unless they were bribed, and handsomely bribed, could they expect to turn a shilling by the transaction? I am very much afraid that this new Earl of Mortlake, who succeeded to the title on the death of my Lady Flavia's father, is somehow implicated in the matter. I am indeed. Is it likely that he should have taken an impostor into his family—and I take your word, Amy, that the girl is an impostor—unless he could reap a rich harvest from this shameful business? Now, remember, this is a mere guess—but it has an ugly look. That property that was left to the old earl's daughter, I am afraid, has been the temptation to foul-play in this wicked affair. The true heiress is shut up in some place of confinement, and the earl and his instrument divide the spoil.' Thus, in the innocence of his heart, and the plenitude of his Indian experience, spoke Richard Ford. But the two young persons to whom he spoke put faith in his words.

'The wicked wretch!' said Amy, with flashing eyes.

'Let's send Skinner off to England; he can run down to Harbledown and pick up something,' cried Charles eagerly; 'and the procureur will lend us Durbec. I'd go myself, only I could do no good, unless I could walk straight into the earl's house and tax him with his share in this robbery. But Skinner can go—Skinner and Durbec.'

And it was agreed that they should go. There was one curious feature in this affair; the honest English family talked always of the missing girl as immured in one of those gloomy dens where force and fraud may in all countries immure the defenceless. Such wrongful imprisonment the law severely punishes, but not with death; yet it was a guillotine and a sentence of death that were ever in the mind of M. Duverriers-Hardouin. Plainly, the ideas of the public prosecutor differed from those of the *famille* Ford.

In the meantime, matters were kept very quiet. There were facilities for this in the practical working of the institutions of the country. In England, such a grisly drama as that which had taken place at the Château des Roches would have stirred society to its depths. A penny-a-lining army of occasional reporters would have marched upon Grésnez-Vignoble. Our own correspondent, our own artist, our special commissioner, would have taken the desolate old château by storm. The illustrated papers would have been too small to contain the views of the battered country-house, the portraits of the police, and the biography of the actors in the tragedy.

But they manage these things better—or at least differently—in France. The prefect of the department ordered his secretary to address a civil note to the editors of such meagre journals as existed within his jurisdiction, and the conductors of those periodicals took the hints which the note conveyed. Messieurs les Rédacteurs were begged to consider how prejudicial to the best interests of order, and how subversive of the respect due to authority, it would be to encourage the circulation of garbled reports and incomplete narratives. How

much wiser and better to wait for the full and accurate information—the correct card, in fact—which would in proper time be furnished by those who alone had access to the truth. Whenever a strange mysterious crime startles us in England, there are not wanting censors who invite the Press to gag itself for the general good, and would have the watch-dog cease barking until the wolf should be stoned by the shepherds. But these self-appointed high-priests of silence cannot, like a French prefect, close the printing-offices, impound the type, and bring the proprietors to grief. It is not very wonderful if the provincial newspapers allowed themselves to be deprived of the pabulum which Brand Royston's arrest would otherwise have afforded them.

And as for the Paris papers, no circular was sent to them, no document that might have got into the hands of some wrong-headed marquis or meddlesome deputy of the Montagne, and so come to be read out in the Chamber or the Senate, in spite of the clamours of the loyal, and the dignified disapproval of the President. But a little, quiet-mannered old gentleman, whose gray head and sleek black suit gave him some resemblance to an elderly jackdaw, went round in his brougham from one publishing office to another, and paid a visit to the editors. Not officially, certainly not. There was no *avertissement* in the case, no solemn threat of fine, imprisonment, suspension of a journal. But the little old gentleman advised the rédacteurs, as a private friend, not to blazon abroad any details of the *affaire* Royston; and no political principle being at stake, the advice was religiously followed. Nevertheless, certain feeble paragraphs did ooze out into circulation, vaguely intimating that there had been a great fire, which had been heroically extinguished by the aid of the gendarmerie, but not without lamentable loss of life among the gallant guardians of order. Not a word, as yet, of arrest and resistance—not a mention of Brand Royston. The newspapers alone were apparently unconscious of what was the talk of all the country round.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—THE COMMERCIAL ROOM.

'Chartley—Chart-ley! Any passengers for Chartley?' sang out the guard in a brisk voice, as he scampered, key in hand, down the platform, releasing such of the occupants of the several compartments as chose to signify by word or gesture a desire to quit the train at the Chartley station.

'We are for Chartley, *s'il vous plaît*. Open the door, I beg. *Merci, monsieur*.' This to a porter who had tugged open the door of the second-class carriage out of the window of which the foreign traveller had thrust his head. And there alighted upon the draughty platform, along which the night-winds were whistling, the figure of an active man, unmistakably no native of these isles. A swarthy, sprightly, broad-chested fellow he was, with flashing dark eyes like the eyes of a falcon, pointed teeth that looked all the whiter for the crisp blackness of his bushy whiskers, and strong coarse hair, as dark as night, as stiff as wire, and as short as the cropped hair of a convict. This man was dressed in a suit of dark navy blue cloth, rather the worse for wear, but neat, and well brushed; he had gold rings in his ears, silver rings on his

fingers, a watch-chain of Maltese filigree-work, and a flaming red bandana tied loosely, by way of a cravat, around his sunburned neck. Any one who knew the world well would have set him down as the skipper of some small French coaster, or more probably still, as mate of a vessel in the Levant trade. There was a salt-water smack about him, outlandish as his finery might be, that would have passed unquestioned by the toughest boatswain in the British service.

Yet the foreign seaman who is now bustling and gesticulating as he reclaims his luggage from out of the heap of trunks, bags, and boxes that is being accumulated on the sloppy platform, bears no trifling resemblance to some one we have seen before. Those pointed teeth are much like those of the maimed poacher who bargained for a stolen pheasant with an English customer, one Mr Royston, on the bridge at Grèze-Vignoble, a few weeks back. Those bold bright eyes, that cause a sort of painful shrinking in other eyes that encounter their piercing glance suddenly, as when we meet the gaze of a bird of prey, were very similar to the eyes which M. Durbec, prince of spies, was accustomed to conceal behind all manner of tinted spectacles and Brazilian pebble-glasses, as Jupiter in the myths was wont to mask his effulgence. Indeed, they were M. Durbec's eyes. The French master-mariner was no other than Antoine Durbec, on a special service. M. Durbec had a good deal of luggage—three trunks and a carpet-bag. His companion, for he was not alone, had much less to look after. That companion was unquestionably English. He was neatly dressed, had an Inverness cape and a railway rug thrown over his left arm, and was stout and florid—a genuine John Bull. A large clasped memorandum-book, or perhaps a book of samples, such as commercial travellers often carry, was peeping out of the outside breast-pocket of his rough greatcoat. His whole aspect, from his iron-gray hair and iron-gray whiskers to his iron-heeled boots, was commercial, and north-country, or at least such as would have suited a veteran of the coal, iron, and cloth and cotton districts, one who had journeyed many a mile in gig and coach before railways existed; and yet he was merely Sergeant Skinner, of the metropolitan police force, detective officer.

'Now, *mon ami*, it is for you to play the pilot, is it not? You have cruised in these seas before, hein? and you know the snuggest harbours, *mille sabords!*' said M. Durbec, rolling a very little in his walk, and lighting a cigar the very instant he was across the threshold of the booking-office. '*Ah! peste!*' he continued, wrapping the hooded *caban* that he wore instead of an overcoat more closely about his broad shoulders; 'do you know that it is damp and clammy, this climate of your old England? I shiver in it, *foi de matelot!*'

The porters and miscellaneous outsiders who were engaged in heaving up Monsieur's luggage to the roof of the omnibus which Monsieur and his friend had notified their intention of patronising, and which belonged to the *Bell, Family and Commercial Hotel*, grinned and jerked their thumbs in sign of intelligence at one another. Foreigners, excepting organ-men and stray Hebrew pedlars, were rare at Chartley. And this foreigner was evidently a seafaring man. He had a good deal of baggage; he had paid a heavy excess-charge for it. The chief-porter shewed the ticket to an admiring

circle of fly-drivers and touters for inns, and the verdict of that irregular jury was that Monsieur was a smuggler.

'You'd have made a fortune on the stage, captain,' said Sergeant Skinner, as the two went thumping and bumping along down the rough road in the jangling ill-hung omnibus. 'To look at you, any chap might swear you were a regular salt.'

Durbec's smile was more melancholy than was usual when his vanity was fed with praise. 'My friend,' he said, 'I am not acting now—at least the part comes naturally to me. I was born on the shores of the Mediterranean, and I almost wish

— But, bah! I will not fatigue you with any sentiments.' And he was silent, and almost sad. He was thinking of the little port of St Tropez, a thousand miles off, in sunny Provence, where he had played with other barefooted urchins on the white beach. His father had been a fisherman there; and his own earliest recollections were of tossing about in the great clumsy boat, with one large lateen sail, on the purple tumbling waves, and of screaming with fear when one of the men, who had caught a big eel of the conger sort, with rough playfulness tossed the struggling monster down at the feet of the *patron's* child. That was before he was drawn for the conscription; before he ran away, and shipped on board the merchantman outward bound for Egypt, and was beaten and starved, and caught the fever of the country; and finally, being discharged, ill and ragged, at Marseille, begged his way to Paris, and was picked up, half dead, on the stones outside the police prefecture.

'The *Bell*, gentlemen,' said a waiter, opening the omnibus-door. The travellers alighted, and the luggage was unloaded from the roof.

'Coffee or Commercial, sir?' asked the waiter dubiously, slipping his napkin to and fro as he spoke. The English new-comer looked Commercial to the backbone; but the Frenchman was a riddle less easily read. However, Sergeant Skinner, whose name, as it appeared on his portmanteau and bag, was Wright, and his address Liverpool, promptly replied in favour of the Commercial Room; but still the waiter hesitated; and as the luggage was being carried past, on its way upstairs, he lingered with his hand on the lock of the room sacred to those who journey in the interests of trade, and said confidentially: 'Beg your pardon, sir, but is this gentleman Commercial too? Because, sir, as you are aware, when other parties as are not themselves Commercial wish to use the Commercial Room, the Commercial always expect the compliment of their consent being asked first—as a matter of form.'

Sergeant Skinner, or rather Mr Wright of Liverpool, chuckled with great enjoyment. 'Captain,' he said to his French friend, who was volubly entreating the Boots of the hotel to be careful of his effects, 'he wants to know whether you are Commercial or not.—Pooh, pooh, young man, you may let us pass. Mounseer, there, is in a larger way of business than I am myself; but it's in his own line—his own line.'

And now they were both in the snug Commercial Room, where the blazing fire and flaring gas were not unwelcome on such a night, and where the waiter took their orders for some substantial refreshment to be prepared as soon as possible.

There were three or four persons present whose right to the occupancy of their own peculiar saloon was indisputable. Most of these were shrewd hard-headed men from Lancashire, Birmingham, or Yorkshire; but one was a Cockney of the raciest genus, one of those check-suited, sandy-whiskered little Londoners that John Leech sketched with no unkind pencil, and who advertise their quality by dropping the letter *h* broadcast in their speech.

'The 'eat, sir'—such were the words which the metropolitan Commercial was uttering, his back to the fire, and his eyes fixed on the best listener present—the 'eat was something horful: Hindia could not have been 'otter. The crush defies comparison; the Hold Bailey and Newgate Street, when a hexecution takes place, hexcepted. The 'ole hexecitement of the day was due to that rivalry between Miss Violet Vavasour' (at mention of which name the speaker smacked his lips, by way of a compliment to beauty) 'and Lady Flavia Clare.'

Here some interruption was naturally caused by the entrance of Mr Wright and his French companion, and the orator stirred the fire with a wrathful growl, but was propitiated by the respectful and silent attention with which both the invaders turned towards him, as if the sound of the noble name of Clare had been talismanic.

The enemy of the letter *h*, who, except in respect to his systematic perversion of that member of the alphabet, was really a glib and fluent speaker, resumed his discourse: 'This Slochester Fancy Fair, as I said before, was a tremendous success, a bumper house; but the hatmosphere was killing. Lots of ladies swooned dead away; I helped to carry out half-a-dozen at least' [for poor Amy's fainting fit had been multiplied like Falstaff's men in buckram]; 'and there that Lady Flavia stood, smiling and chaffing the young swells about her, and no more caring for the 'eat than if she had been a salamander. I take it she was used to 'ot rooms habroad, for you know, or, if you don't, I do, that she was a concert-singer, and on the stage, too, I believe, in France.'

'Do you know that for a fact?' sneered one of the Birmingham men, or a Sheffield blade it may have been, across the room.

'Know it? Of course I do. Lady Flavia Clare's father, the late earl, turned 'er hout of doors when he divorced 'er mother. She had to get 'er bread as best she could. She's monstrous rich now; governor made a new will. I know a good deal of 'er 'istory. You see I've a huncle in these parts, and I was down in November for a blaze at the birds.—But I'm keeping the fire from you gents.' And the kindly little man of Cockayne, who had been flattered by the deference with which the two new-comers drank in his words, made way for them to warm themselves, if so disposed.

'Thank you,' said Mr Wright; 'we're quite comfortable. Coldish weather, though; nasty sort of thaw. I don't know this part of the country; much business doing?'

Now this was a question that admitted of but one form of answer. If you ask a gold-digger, as he works waist-deep in pipeclay, forty feet below the surface, in his explorations of a sunken reef in Gipps Land, how he gets on in the auriferous line, what will be his reply? Do you expect him to descant on rich wash-dirt and large nuggets, or

to be expansive about the 'pocket' of glittering spangles and yellow water-worn nodules that gladdened his eyes yesterday? Will a merchant tell you that money is going a-begging, so to speak, in that Tom Tiddler's Ground, the City? Or will a genuine beggar frankly inform you that Belgravian cooks are charitable, and that Brompton ladies are becoming liberal of their small-change? Until this millennium of truth-telling, what need for a new commercial traveller to ask for information from his rivals already in possession of the circuit?

'Very slack,' said one of the company. 'Times bad; nothing doing,' growled a second. 'Horrid hole; benighted neighbourhood. A man throws away his time and his money to no purpose hereabouts,' authoritatively pronounced a third.

The eyes of Mr Wright twinkled merrily. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I don't come among you to diminish your profits. I sha'n't take the wind out of your sails; we sha'n't clash at all, I'll warrant you.'

'You don't travel in hardware?' said one questioner. 'Nor buttons?' asked another. 'Nor Manchester piece-goods?' 'Nor woollens?' cried two other anxious voices.

No, Mr Wright travelled in none of these lines. His was a fancy business, quite—a foreign commodity—a patent affair that had better, ahem! be kept secret for the present. But he pledged his honour not to sell, or try to sell, so much as a penknife, or a yard of gingham, or a gross of buttons, or an ell of cloth, in Chartley, or Slochester, or Honeycombe; and he gave the company free leave, in his jocular way, to tar and feather him, or to subject him to retaliatory discipline under the parish pump, if ever they caught him undermining their established connection; this sally being exceedingly well received, Mr Wright took the opportunity of introducing to the worshipful society his foreign friend, Capitaine Goulôt, of the French mercantile marine, who was desirous of setting up a dépôt in some thriving town in the west of England, for the sale of certain Algerian commodities which the captain's knowledge of North African markets enabled him to import at a profit. And Captain Goulôt soon spoke for himself, in tolerable English, garnished with a number of strange maritime oaths, and eked out by a perfect pantomime of shrugs, grins, bows, and snappings of the fingers. He, the captain, was transported to find himself so well received, here, in this *vicille Angleterre*, that he was now visiting for the first time. He admired the British character, so robust, so solid; he liked the country; he loved the ladies; all he could not praise was the climate, which was brumous and melancholic. But what mattered that? With our admirable ale, our gr-r-rog, our punch, we could defy the weather. Punch—it was an idea that: might he, he, Maxime Goulôt, captain, late in command of the brig *Cerfvolant*, of Certe, trading to Tetuan, Oran, Algiers, Tunis, and Malta—might he have the felicity to offer a bowl of punch to the honourable company? Would they permit him? They would?—*ah, bonheur!* 'Waiter! a large bowl of punch *au rhum*, and let it be blazing wiz fire!'

The punch was brought; and at the same time the head-waiter came in to say that a gent. had just come in, that the Coffee-room fire was out, and perhaps the gentlemen would have no objection to

letting the stranger come into the Commercial Room. The gentlemen were propitious, and the stranger was shewn in—a little man, with light whiskers, and a face very much flushed with the combined effects of strong heady port and rapid motion through the cold night-air—the face of Mr Ebenezer Hart, gentleman, attorney-at-law, and agent to Right Hon. the Earl of Mortlake.

ELECTORAL STATISTICS.

It needs no political Fitzroy to foretell the approach of a general election. The premonitory signs are patent to every newspaper reader. The continual recurrence of items headed 'Election Intelligence,' the valedictory announcements of tired-out legislators, and the promise-stuffed appeals of gentlemen anxious to win the sweet voices and sweeter votes of the many, warn us that the seventh reformed parliament is drawing to its end. Such a time seems a fitting one to examine the statistics of the electoral world, and note the changes wrought during the thirty odd years that have elapsed since our six-centuried institution underwent reconstruction.

The register of 1864 shews that the electors of the United Kingdom now number 1,333,690. Of these, England claims 972,357; Ireland, 205,625; Scotland, 101,737; and Wales, 53,971: the number of members returned by England being 469; by Ireland, 105; by Scotland, 53; and by Wales, 29. The Principality therefore possesses the greatest representative power in proportion to its electoral strength, having a member for every 1860 voters; Scotland comes next with one for every 1919; then Ireland, with one for 1958; while England has to be content with one representative for 2073 electors. In Scotland alone, the borough preponderate over the county voters; the latter, in fact, greatly outnumber their brethren of the towns, counting 757,080 against 576,610; but the boroughs have succeeded in obtaining the lion's share of the representation, returning no less than 402 of the 656 members of which the Commons House consists; and it is somewhat puzzling to understand how 1434 borough electors came to be reckoned equivalent to 2980 county voters.

One constituency only—that of London City, 17,593 strong—returns four representatives to parliament; eight return three members each: of these, one counts above 20,000 electors, one above 7000, five have more than 5000, and one—Berkshire—misses that number by a score. The West Riding of Yorkshire stands at the head of the doubly-represented constituencies, boasting 40,476 electors; the metropolitan borough of the Tower Hamlets has 31,251; and its sister, Lambeth, 25,037. Finsbury, Marylebone, and Manchester come next, with above 20,000 each. Four constituencies register between 15,000 and 20,000 electors; seven, between 12,000 and 15,000; six, between 10,000 and 12,000. Twenty-two fall short of 10,000; thirty-six have less than 7000; sixty-one, less than 5000; thirty-three, less than 2000; twenty-nine, less than 1000; twenty-two, less than 500; and six fail to muster 200 voters. One hundred and forty-six constituencies are represented by a single member each, but some of these shew a goodly array of electors; two among them passing their fifth thousand, and no less than twenty

counting between 2000 and 5000. Forty-one constituencies contain between 1000 and 2000 voters; thirty-seven, between 500 and 1000; thirteen, between 300 and 500; and fourteen, between 200 and 300. Five places register something between 150 and 200; while the rear is brought up by three Irish boroughs—Cashel, 146; Kinsale, 145; and Portarlinton, 106.

Electoral considered, the six strongest counties in the three kingdoms are Middlesex, containing 125,185 voters; Yorkshire, 106,037; Lancashire, 93,203; Surrey, 52,194; Kent, 38,496; and Gloucestershire, 37,645; but if we reckon by representatives, the palm must be awarded to Yorkshire, 37; Lancashire, 27; Devonshire, 22; and Hampshire, 19; Wilts, Kent, and Sussex running a dead heat for fifth place, with eighteen members apiece.

Berkshire and Westmoreland share the doubtful distinction of being the only English counties with weaker constituencies than they had in 1832, the first having suffered a decrease of ten per cent., and the second nearly one and a half per cent., although both have increased their population—Berks by twenty-one, and Westmoreland by seventy-three per cent. As to the other counties, we subjoin their names, affixing to each the rate per cent. at which they have added to their registers since 1832: Cambridgeshire, 6; Notts, 6; Norfolk, 7; Pembrokeshire, 8; Bucks, 9; Dorsetshire, 9; Huntingdonshire, 10; Northumberland, 13; Somersetshire, 15; Sussex, 16; Caermarthenshire, 16; Northamptonshire, 17; Bedfordshire, 19; Cheshire, 24; Lincolnshire, 25; Cumberland, 27; Oxfordshire, 28; Kent, 28; Essex, 28; Gloucestershire, 29; Monmouthshire, 29; Cornwall, 31; Derbyshire, 31; Montgomeryshire, 32; Wilts, 34; Herts, 35; Rutlandshire, 36; Caernarvonshire, 36; Leicestershire, 38; Durham, 41; Devonshire, 42; Worcestershire, 44; Suffolk, 45; Shropshire, 46; Herefordshire, 47; Radnorshire, 53; Denbighshire, 55; Warwickshire, 62; Staffordshire, 77; Yorkshire, 89; Anglesea, 101; Lancashire, 106; Middlesex, 109; Hampshire, 113; Surrey, 123; Flintshire, 138; Merionethshire, 154; Cardigan-shire, 188; Brecknockshire, 223.

One hundred and fifty-four boroughs in England and Wales have increased their constituencies, forty-five have grown weaker, and one—that of Morpeth—remains with exactly the same number of electors now as it had thirty-two years ago. Of the more prosperous boroughs, two have increased less than one per cent.; sixteen from one to ten per cent.; fifteen from ten to twenty per cent.; thirty-eight from twenty to fifty; forty-three from fifty to a hundred; and twenty-seven from one to two hundred per cent. Eleven have increased between two and three hundred per cent.; Lambeth has attained the high rate of 425 per cent.; and Reigate caps all by adding 449 per cent. to its electoral roll. Chichester has contrived to lose seventy-six per cent. of its voters, and stands unequalled in this respect. Twelve boroughs have lost from thirty to seventy-five per cent., nineteen from ten to thirty per cent.—the remaining thirteen unlucky ones suffering in varying degrees from one to nine per cent. As only nine of these unprogressive boroughs have decreased in population, while thirteen of the more thriving ones are in that predicament, some other explanation must be sought for their electoral deterioration. The secret probably lies in the dying out of the

burgesses, freemen, potwallopers, and other 'old-right' voters, whose privileges were sentenced to gradual extinction.

Every Scotch burgh has increased in voting strength; out of the twenty-one, seven have increased more than fifty per cent., and Ayr and Glasgow have more than doubled the number of their electors. The counties, although not so uniformly prosperous, have no reason to be ashamed, in most instances shewing a very creditable rate of progress. Caithness-shire stands first, with an increase of 223 per cent.; and Forfarshire, Clackmannan and Kinross, Orkney and Shetland, Selkirkshire, Fifeshire, and Renfrewshire, have all added more than a hundred per cent. to their constituencies. Edinburghshire and Perthshire are the Berks and Westmoreland of Scotland, the former having lost 22, and the latter 18 per cent. The Irish registers are rendered valueless for comparative purpose by reason of the alteration made in the franchise in 1850, so we content ourselves with noting the fact that, despite the great decrease in the population of the country, its constituencies have attained an extraordinary increase in numbers, the county of Tyrone, for example, boasting 8371 electors now, against 1151 in 1832.

The county constituencies of Argyll, Anglesea, Armagh, Caernarvon, Dumfries, Elgin and Nairn, Fermanagh, North Lancashire, and South Leicestershire have never, since 1832, experienced the turmoil and excitement of a contested election; and the boroughs of Beaumaris, Eye, Malton, Midhurst, Morpeth, Radnor, Swansea, and Thirsk have shared their happy ignorance; while the eleven counties of Brecknock, Cardigan, Forfar, Kincardine, Montgomery, Pembroke, Rutland, North Shropshire, South Shropshire, Westmoreland, and the East Riding of Yorkshire, and the boroughs of Arundel, Calne, Dorchester, Downpatrick, Droitwich, Richmond, Wexford, Wilton, and Whitehaven, and the university of Cambridge, have only enjoyed the doubtful pleasure once.

In twenty-three cases, victory was secured by a majority of one, and there have occurred seven instances of ties. In one of these, the mayor thought to settle matters by giving his candidate a casting vote, but a petition to parliament brought his friend to grief, and gave the seat to his opponent. The closest contests recorded were those of Ipswich (1837), when the four candidates polled respectively 601, 595, 593, 593; Knarborough (1852), when the numbers were 113, 113, 113, 107; and Weymouth (1847), with its 274, 274, 272, 271; but for a well-fought fight, commend us to the election for London in 1841, when parties were so equally balanced in that large constituency, that two of each side were returned, and there was only a difference of 312 between the candidate at the head of the poll and the last of the eight competitors—Lord J. Russell polling 6221 votes, and only escaping defeat by nine. The returns for Carlou county afford a striking series of examples of that conscientious party-spirit that forbids alike plumping and splitting of votes. In 1832, Blakeney and Wallace polled 657 each, Bruen and Kavanagh 483 and 470. In 1835, there were two elections; in the first contest, Bruen and Kavanagh obtained 588 and 587, O'Connell and Cahill 554 and 553; in the second, Vigers and Raphael scored 627 and 626, Kavanagh and Bruen 572 and 571. In 1837, Vigers and Yates polled 730 each, and their opponents 643 each. In

1841, Bruen and Bunbury were returned by 705 and 704, and their unsuccessful rivals polled 697 and 696.

Sixty-five constituencies have always been represented by Liberals, and forty-three have proved constant to the Conservative party. Cheltenham and North Northumberland, unswervingly impartial, have always divided their favours.

Sir W. J. Ramsden, when returned for the West Riding in 1859, polled the highest number of votes recorded since 1832, heading the pole with 15,978. The largest number ever secured in a borough was 9318, when Lambeth sent Mr Roupell into the House of Commons with the credit of having polled nearly 5000 more votes than any candidate for the representation of that borough. In 1832, twenty votes sufficed to seat Mr J. O'Connell for Youghal, by a majority of seventeen, and that in a constituency 297 strong! We find no less than fifty-six unsuccessful candidates failing to secure half-a-dozen adherents. Of these unpopular aspirants for political fame, seven contrived to poll five, and five scored four votes; thirteen rejoiced in three supporters, and the same number were obliged to be content with two; eight gentlemen had just one vote recorded in their favour (in one case, this occurred in a constituency counting more than 24,000 electors), and ten unfortunates could not convince a single voter of their fitness for legislative duties.

Elections are not always settled when the returning officer has done his part. Since the passing of the Reform Act, 138 petitions have been presented against the victors at the polling-booths, of which the large proportion of 116 emanated from places possessing less than 2000 electors.

It is rather startling to find that one-half of the House of Commons is returned by less than 14 per cent. of the aggregate body of electors; although the fact seems less astonishing after learning, by a simple sum, that if the ten electoral counties of Westmoreland, Huntingdonshire, Rutlandshire, West Cumberland, North Northumberland, South Shropshire, West Sussex, West Worcestershire, and North and South Wiltshire were rolled into one, their united population would be less than that of the West Riding of Yorkshire by 617,485; and their united constituencies be 3801 behind that powerful county division. Yet the ten return twenty members to the West Riding's modest two!

If the electors of Portarlington were aware of the comparative value of their votes, they would doubtless be chary in the bestowal of them; but probably the members of that select band of suffrage-holders are in happy ignorance of the fact, that each of them are electorally considered equal in value to forty-four electors of Edinburgh, forty-seven of Dublin, eighty-three of London, a hundred and three of Manchester, a hundred and forty-seven of the Tower Hamlets, or a hundred and ninety electors of West Yorkshire. It is also well to know that one member of Dublin University is equal to two of Oxford, and that it takes exactly fifty-one Cantabs to balance thirty-seven Oxonians.

Mr Acland, who has been at the pains of collecting the facts and figures upon which our statistics are founded,* is naturally horrified at the anomalies and inconsistencies of the system or no-system by which our parliaments are elected.

* *The Imperial Poll Book.* By James Acland.

He proposes a reconstruction of constituencies on the principle, that every member should represent an equal number of electors; but pending such reconstruction—having evidently unbounded faith in the wisdom of majorities—he suggests that the votes of members of the House of Commons shall, upon all questions for the decision of which a division shall be taken, be considered as the votes of the electoral constituents they individually represent, and be counted for as many as may be their representative proportion of the registered electors of their constituencies. This is no place for discussing the expediency of carrying out Mr Acland's plan, but we may be allowed to point out some curious results that would follow its adoption in the present parliament.

The Colonial Secretary's vote would be worth four times as much as that of the Home Secretary. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would count for eight times as much as the Premier. The divisional value of the Judge-advocate-general would be nearly three times that of the President of the Board of Trade; and one or two under-secretaries would considerably outweigh the heads of their departments. The opinion of Mr Cox upon any question whatever would be practically worth six times that of Mr Gladstone, twenty-seven times that of Lord Stanley, and forty-nine times that of Lord Palmerston; and to crown the absurdity, a member whose name is hardly known beyond the limits of the borough he represents, would reckon in the division-list for exactly twice as much as the whole of the cabinet ministers!

BUYING LIFE.

I AM inclined to think that the Divines are wrong in so universally ascribing to the Prosperous a love of this life, and I doubt whether the notion of Extinction does possess that terror for the human heart which is always ascribed to it by pulpit orators. It is the misfortune of the clergy, and yet one which we can scarcely wish remedied, that, regarding our fallen nature from a high orthodox stand-point themselves, they are often ignorant of how it looks from the position occupied by their less well-principled fellow-creatures. 'Who is there without religion that does not contemplate death without a shudder?' is an expression very common in sermons. Even the atheist, we are told, recoils from the gloomy Void of which it is his poor notion that Death is the portal. Yet in China it costs less than fifty pounds to get a substitute to suffer capital punishment in your place, if the Son of the Moon and First Cousin to all the Planets has decreed your execution, and there are few more irreligious people under heaven than the Chinese. Moreover, these substitutes are often very respectable men, who wish to benefit their wife and children by the transaction; just as gentlemen here at home (less creditably) insure their lives in an indisputable office for the advantage of their families, and then put an end to their own existence.

It is true that some of these Celestial proxies are regular scamps, and stipulate for the money down, and a week's grace in which to spend it

in the most abandoned manner; but Death is evidently no more feared in this case than in the other. In Japan, malefactors smoke upon the very scaffold, while their companions are having their heads cut off, and calmly remove their cheroots from their lips when their turn comes round. In Africa, a hearty meal—off something which here at home we should give to our pigs—seems to reconcile any gentleman of average philosophy to dissolution, by violence. Nay, even in England there is sometimes exhibited an equal callousness as to that question supposed to be so engrossing, *Are we to Live or to Die?* A few years before the introduction of the new police, one Johnson was brought up at Bow Street upon the charge of hanging a certain Robert Wynd, his friend. Two watchmen had actually caught him, upon some waste ground with a little convenient timber on it, employed in this very act, and Wynd was black in the face and insensible when they cut him down. No sooner did he recover than he proceeded to attempt to rescue his companion, and therefore was himself charged with obstructing the officers in the execution of their duty. It came out, in evidence, that both the prisoners were greatly given to gambling, but having lost all they had, could get nobody to engage with them at their favourite game, which, if I remember right, was cribbage. They were therefore compelled to play with one another, and having nothing else to risk, each literally 'staked his existence.' Whoever won was to have the privilege of putting the other to death, and Fortune had declared herself in favour of Mr Johnson. Not only did this gentleman most vehemently insist upon his rights, but Wynd upon his part was perfectly willing to pay forfeit; and even after being 'worked off,' and resuscitated—when it became a very nice point of honour as to whether he was not free of his agreement—resented, as has been described, the interference of the watchmen, and expressed his readiness and even desire to suffer death. Of course the religious element was totally absent in this case, and what the poor wretch expected was extinction. It is indeed impossible that persons not called upon to risk life by duty or necessity, should do so, as they often do, if the terror attached to the loss of it were so universal or so extreme. I remember being in the crowd at the corner of King William Street upon a certain Lord Mayor's Day, just as the civic procession was about to pass by. The pressure was extreme, and there were cries and screams from all sides from women and children who were in danger of being crushed. It was difficult even for a strong man to keep his legs, and yet in the centre of us all was a street acrobat, balancing a pole of at least forty feet high, upon the top of which was his mate, pretending to swim, and performing all sorts of agile feats. Of himself, he could probably take care, like M. Blondin or any other professor of lofty tumbling; but his safety was solely and wholly dependent upon the man below; and any unexpected heave of the tossing

throne, or even a policeman moving sharply through the press (as a policeman alone could do), would have been his death-warrant. Apart from this indifference to life in very many, to most of us who are accustomed to stand face to face with Death, or who can contemplate, at leisure, his sure approach, his features lose much of their grisly terror. It is when he makes his sudden appearance, when totally unlooked for, that he shews himself the King, and we confess ourselves with such servility to be his subjects. Let one cry 'Fire!' in a Theatre, and only some half-dozen men in all the mighty concourse will retain their manliness.

I recollect such an occurrence, in a provincial town in the United States, where not only was the playhouse crammed with people, but the edifice was built of wood. This fact, so common in that out-of-the-way district that it probably had never occurred to one out of fifty of the audience before, seemed to strike them all at the first alarm. No stampede of frightened cattle could have been more complete than that frantic rush of human beings toward the doors. A gentleman in front of me had just left his place, taking out with him his wife and child. I had noticed that he was very white, and thought he was unwell. He had been the first, as it afterwards turned out, to suspect the dreadful truth, but until he reached the open air he had not ventured to disclose it. If, with those helpless dear ones in his charge, he really foresaw what was to happen, I cannot blame him. Two or three others almost immediately afterwards strove to do the like, but in the meantime the fatal cry had been raised, from some one less prudent, in the boxes, and that whole mass of civilised, educated, Christian folk, in fashionable apparel and fine linen, was transformed upon the instant into a tribe of yelling savages.

For my own part, I had my wits sufficiently about me to know that to attempt egress through any one of the few narrow doors that offered, already choked with struggling hundreds, was mere hopeless frenzy. One man, and one only, in my immediate neighbourhood seemed to be of the same mind. He kept his place, a few seats off, with his eyes still fixed upon the stage, from which the performers had fled; in a vast space already emptied of the late occupants, were we two alone, while at its edge the crowd shrieked and strove, and clambered one upon the other, while the smoke, from we knew not whence, began to gain consistence, and make a lurid glare, where before had been only splendour and brightness. Suddenly a flash of hope started through me, and then a shudder of fear, lest the same idea should strike others, and render my way of escape impracticable like the rest. Nothing but the panic in which all were plunged could account for the little door within the orchestra being forgotten. But the musicians did not happen to be in their places when the alarm was raised, and the space they occupied was shut in by a hoarding sufficiently high to prevent the little hole of ingress from beneath the stage from being seen. Out of sight, it was thus forgotten altogether. As I stole towards it, I had to pass by this man, so philosophic and calm (as I had deemed him) in the midst of such deadly peril. I had been hitherto behind him, but one look at his face convinced me that his quiet did not at all events arise from fortitude. Large drops of perspiration stood upon his forehead; his face was livid; his

lips endeavoured to address me in vain. He was paralysed, as I now imagined, by excessive and abject fear. His eyes only, straining towards the orchestra door—which was even more hidden than it would otherwise have been, by the big drum—convinced me that he was aware of my intention, and even that he had anticipated it.

'Take me with you, and I will give you ten thousand dollars,' cried he in a hoarse whisper. 'Take me with you, I say.'

There was a curious implication of threat and insolent demand in his deep hard tones that struck me even at that moment of haste and peril; but I only answered: 'Be silent, fool, and come on; there is no time to lose.'

'I am a cripple, and cannot stir,' replied he. 'Refuse me, and I will cry aloud to all these people, and then both you and they will be crushed to death.'

I swear that it was not his menace which moved me to take him upon my shoulders. I was touched by his forlorn condition, paralysed as I now perceived he was in one of his limbs, and incapable even of rising without assistance.

'Ten thousand dollars,' whispered he into my ear; 'and a good deed, and a good deed.'

It was evident that he was a gentleman engaged in commercial pursuits, or, at all events, one accustomed to estimate profits in all their bearings.

So engaged were the rest of the people in the body of the house in their terrible conflict—for such the struggle had by this time become—that they did not pay any attention to us two upon our way to the orchestra; but it was a long business getting my helpless burthen over the high barrier, and no sooner had I accomplished it, than I heard an inarticulate cry of rage and desire break forth behind us, which told me that our intention was guessed. Then there came a storm of feet. Now, the door of exit was so very small, that no person could pass through it without stooping; the carrying a man out upon shoulder-back was out of the question, so I had to push my companion feet foremost before me, just as though he had been something inanimate, like a wheel-barrow. This, of course, took time; and I had hardly got him well through, and had emerged myself, when the maddened throng were upon us. It was the most terrible sight the imagination can conceive. In eagerness and fury, the poor, wretched people came on like blood-hounds, not indeed thirsting for our lives, but each bent upon saving his own, no matter at whose expense. There were scarcely any women among them. Only the strongest and least encumbered could have cleared the many rows of seats and the orchestra partition in that marvellously short time. But, alas, all their labour was in vain. They came upon the low aperture a struggling, knotted mass, and could no more make their way through it than if there had been no opening whatsoever. I saw this as I cast one hurried glance behind me, ere I made for a dull light, which was *not* fire, gleaming at the far end of the dark space in which we found ourselves. In another minute, we were safe in a narrow lane outside the theatre. Setting down my living burden, I rushed round to the main entrance, where, as I expected, the street was already densely crowded, for the tidings of the catastrophe had spread far and wide. But as yet there was not a gleam of flame to be seen; only the same knotted throng

I had just seen twisting and coiling out of the single door of egress, and a dreadful agonised murmur among the spectators, who knew not how to help them. To stand back, and give room for escape, was all that could be done. I seized a fireman by the arm, and in a few seconds put him in possession of what was happening at the back of the house.

He hastily communicated with his superior, and in less time than it takes to tell it, both ends of the lane were guarded, to keep it clear; and half-a-dozen men with axes and crowbars were detailed to enter the place beneath the Stage, and break down the orchestra planking that imprisoned those unfortunates. Many of them were cruelly maimed, but not a single death occurred either there or elsewhere. The rush after our two selves had diverted a mass of people from the choked passages, and in time set them free, although, had the fire increased apace, but few indeed would have escaped. The house was very full of smoke, but this was traced to a lumber-room above stairs, where some stage properties were smouldering; but this was nipped in the bud before it blossomed into the direful flower, Flame. Still, I shall never forget that scene of panic. As for my paralysed friend, he found the means of locomotion from the spot where I had placed him; and I heard of him the other day, for the first time, at a party of savans and philosophers here in London, where the question of the value set upon life by its possessors was being debated, and especially the subject—which heads this paper—of *Buying Life*. Cases such as I have instanced, where it had been bought, absolutely purchased by money, were cited, and among them a curious adventure in an American theatre, where a rich man, who was a cripple, had bribed a stranger, upon an alarm of fire, to carry him out like another Anchesis upon his pious shoulders—for ten thousand dollars!

'Sir,' said I to the cosmopolitan gentleman who was telling this anecdote—picked up, he confessed, he knew not from what source—the man you speak of got even a cheaper bargain than you represent; for if he did purchase his safety at the price you mention, I can inform you upon the best authority that he never paid the money.'

This personal experience of my own elicited others bearing upon this matter, and two of a very interesting character. They had both reference to the purchasing of life at sea.

Some years ago, when the communication between England and Ireland was not so rapid or so frequent as at present, a gentleman of some property, whom we will call Mr Handsworth, embarked at Liverpool for Dublin in a sailing packet, which (most fortunately for himself) did not happen to carry his majesty's mails. His constitution was delicate, and so greatly affected by sea-sickness, that before he had been at sea a couple of hours he broke a blood-vessel. There was a surgeon on board who did all he could for him, but the sea was rough, and the vessel pitched exceedingly, for the wind was almost dead against her.

'It is my duty to tell you, Mr Handsworth,' said this gentleman gravely, 'that it is impossible you can ever reach Ireland alive.'

'Of that I am well convinced,' returned the patient despondingly; 'and my sufferings are such that I hope death is not far off.'

But the sick man's wife took the doctor aside, and said: 'If the vessel put back to Liverpool, when the wind would be behind us, and we should reach land in an hour, would there not be hope for my husband then?'

'Certainly there would,' returned he. 'But the thing could not be done. There are many persons on board to whom time is of importance'—

'Surely not of such importance as it is to us,' interrupted the lady plaintively. 'We are rich, doctor; I would cheerfully give all we have to save my husband's life.'

'How much can you promise?' inquired the other. 'Be sure I do not ask this for my own sake; but it is necessary that I should know.'

So the lady made a hasty calculation of what she and her husband had to offer for the redemption of his life, and the doctor left the cabin to see what could be done.

At first the skipper stoutly declared that to put back was out of the question; that it was as much as his place was worth; that he had his duty to perform to his owners; and finally, that even if such were not the case, there were the passengers, any one of whom objecting to return would settle the matter, since he would have good ground of action against the packet company.

'Very true,' said the doctor; 'but if I can come to terms with the passengers, promise me that you yourself will not be deaf to reason and humanity, and, let us say, five hundred pounds.'

'Well,' rejoined the skipper, 'if you can persuade all the passengers, fore and aft, I daresay the poor gentleman will not have to lay his death at my door. The sum you mention will amply repay all concerned with the ship, and if less suffices, I will return the difference.'

So the doctor convened a meeting of the passengers, and set before them in simple but moving terms the exact state of the case, bringing forward the wife of the patient to corroborate his statement, and perhaps, too, with the design of making a greater impression upon their feelings. The few gentry and rich persons who were on board acquiesced in the humane arrangement, and the poor, to their honour, were for the most part not one whit behind them. Only one or two murmured (but grumbling rather than actually refusing) of what they should lose by the delay.

'Nobody shall lose,' said the doctor; 'all reasonable claims shall be allowed. I am sure there is no man here who will take advantage of a fellow-creature's hour of need to exaggerate his loss.'

The doctor was right. Although there were a large number of fore-cabin passengers, less than double the sum which he had offered to the captain sufficed to obtain the consent of every soul on board. The vessel was put back at once, and Mr Handsworth's life was saved.

I will conclude this paper with even a still more curious instance of Buying Life, which likewise occurred at sea. Without intelligence and science, it is true that even money would in this case have been useless; but *without* money, life must have been lost. The circumstances are as follow.

Not many years ago, a young Englishman of the name of Chapman, enjoying a good position in commercial life in Calcutta, was obliged, on account of failing health, to return to his native country. It was considered by his medical attendants that

a long sea-voyage would likely be beneficial, so instead of going the overland route, he embarked in a vessel which went 'round the Cape.' Very soon after he had started, however, it became evident that his physicians had been mistaken. The motion of the ship produced excessive nausea, weakness, and finally total prostration. He loathed every kind of nourishment, and what was given him did him no good. By the time he reached the Cape, indeed, he was worn to a shadow, and was carried out and placed in the hotel at Cape Town more dead than alive, while the steamer went on without him. Here, under the skilful attendance of a certain surgeon, whom we will call Mr Ayliffe, he gradually recovered, until he became not worse, although no better, than when he started from Calcutta. His mind was most anxiously fixed upon getting to England, where kind friends awaited him; and yet he was perfectly persuaded that directly he set foot on shipboard, his malady would return, and that it was out of all reason to imagine that he could ever reach home alive.

Under these circumstances, he was doomed to be an involuntary exile for life in Cape Colony; for the land-journey across Africa, including as it did the Mountains of the Moon and the Desert of the Great Sahara, was not one to be undertaken by an invalid. Among the singular positions in which even civilised man is still occasionally placed, this of Mr Chapman's was surely one of the most remarkable. All the king's horses and all the king's men, as the ballad says, could not convey or convoy him by land; all the steamships and all the sailing-vessels could not take him by sea. His case defied the improvements and scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century, and indeed appeared to be hopeless. Nothing remained for him but to marry and 'settle.' English ladies are scarce in that locality, and he might have had even to penetrate to Caffraria, and ally himself with a Hottentot, or, worse, have a Boer for a brother-in-law. I defy my readers to guess how Mr Thomas Chapman escaped from these perils, and arrived in England safe and sound; but yet—and remember I am telling a perfectly true story—he did so.

Touched by his patient's yearning after home, Mr Ayliffe had turned over in his own mind all sorts of devices to obtain this desired end, and at last he hit upon the right one. He caused a sort of four-post bed to be constructed, with curtains that shut closely all about it; and upon the arrival of the first ship with a vacant cabin, he suspended the whole affair to the ceiling thereof by means of a ball-and-socket chain. In this curtained room, as one may call it, Mr Chapman was placed; and he arrived in England without having suffered the least sickness. The ball-and-socket arrangement accommodated itself to every movement of the ship, so that he maintained his level; while the close-drawn curtains prevented him from perceiving that other things lost their equilibrium.* In fact, he was not able to perceive that he was on board a ship at all. I do not know how much the apparatus

* It has been said that a device of a similar kind was used by George IV., to prevent sea-sickness in his yacht-expeditions, but without such complete success. Yet surely it would be well worth the while of wealthy folks who suffer from this ailment, and have to make long voyages, to take advantage of whatever mitigation this plan may afford.

cost, nor what sum his gratitude dictated to be paid to the wise surgeon; but it is certain that with that money he ransomed himself from exile, and bought his Life.

WINE AS IT IS.

It would perhaps be rash to assert that the old motto, *In vino veritas*, deserves no faith whatever; but certainly experience goes greatly against the belief that there is any truth in the wine of modern days. For anything we know to the contrary, matters may have been just as bad in the days of the Luculluses—nay, even the gods themselves may have been cheated in their Nectar. But we do know that whilst the British public are every day becoming more of a wine-drinking people—and probably just because they are becoming so—the adulteration of wine is every day practised to a larger extent, and brought to a greater perfection. Genuine wine can no doubt be obtained, and, as it happens, too, wine of the most wholesome sort, and at comparatively low prices. But it also happens that this class of wine has not yet come into general favour in England. That the higher-priced wines most in demand must be taken largely on trust as to genuineness, we think we can have very little difficulty in shewing.

Sherry is probably the wine most in demand in this country; but any dealer who knows his trade, and who is reasonably disposed to be honest, must frankly allow that we are far more indebted to Africa than to Spain for the wine that passes under the name of sherry. According to tolerably trustworthy authority, it is in proof that fully three-fourths of the article sold in this country as sherry is really nothing more than common Cape wine, cleverly concocted to suit all tastes. The cost of Cape wine is low enough, as any one may easily ascertain, but cheap as Cape wine is, we have heard of even a cheaper basis for the manufacture of a good saleable sherry. Cider, which sells sometimes at as low a price as sixpence a gallon, when the orchard-produce has been very plentiful, has been found to answer admirably, in skilful hands, as a liquid out of which sherry may be made. To deprive the Cape wines and the cider of acidity, gray salt, potash, and lime are used; and to clarify them, white of eggs, isinglass, or bullock's blood fresh from the slaughter-house; indeed, for the very common sorts of wine, horse's blood is more frequently used. Body is given to the article by the use of Foster's neutral spirit—a perfectly colourless and strong spirit of wine. For the basis of Port wine, the common red wine of Spain is extensively used; though latterly, since French wines have been admitted at a low duty, the commoner sorts of claret have been brought into use in the manufacturing process, clearness and body being attained by the same methods as are applied to the perfecting of sherry. Apparently, port wine is an article of consumption that *must* be doctored to suit the British palate, for even the very best, as imported direct

from Portugal, has to be largely adulterated with brandy to make it saleable in our markets.

But it is in the flavouring and colouring of the different sorts of port and sherry that the greatest taste and skill are shewn. Here, however, chemistry steps in to aid the wine-merchant, and not only relieves him of the trouble of research, but takes all the drudgery of preparation off his hands. The initiated in London are aware of the visits of an individual at certain establishments, whose sole stock in trade consists of sundry not very large bottles, containing liquids of various colours. Morning or early forenoon is his time for doing business, and the transactions are generally for ready money, with few questions asked or answered. This is the dealer in essences, and the essences play an all-important part in wine-making. Essence of sloe-juice gives a dryness and colour combined. Essence of black-currants produces both body and richness of flavour—much esteemed in good port wines—and expressed juice of Orleans plums is found to answer the same purpose. A solution of tannin in spirits gives the requisite astringency and the true sherry flavour to inferior Cape wines—such as Captain Wegg proposed to introduce into common use as ‘a good dinner-sherry, at twelve shillings a dozen, bottles included.’ For the costlier brown sherries, a very superior wine called Color, worth perhaps about a hundred pounds per butt, is sparingly used for the purpose of giving colour; and in the commoner sorts, caramel, or burnt sugar, effects the same object. Palm-oil dissolved in spirits gives a rich golden colour to sherry; and almond-paste produces a fine nutty flavour, which flavour can also be obtained by the use of nitro-benzole—the latter article being largely used in flavouring cheap sherries. We will not pretend to say that we can name all the ingredients used in the ‘doctoring’ of our drinks, for there may be mysteries within mysteries; but we know that in addition to the articles just mentioned, salt, common sugar, capsicums, grains of Paradise, sulphuric acid, cream of tartar, and glycerine play their parts in adding flavour, and in producing oiliness, crustiness, and beads in the liquids we are asked to consume as port and sherry.

There could be no greater mistake than to suppose that adulteration is confined to the wines most commonly consumed in England. We are not sure indeed but that the adulteration of champagne is carried to even a greater extent than the adulteration of port and sherry. It is only a short time since that a suit in the Court of Queen's Bench, arising out of a dispute in connection with some dock-warrants, disclosed the fact, that champagne that will fetch a guinea a bottle on the race-course, need not cost the retailer more than thirteen shillings a dozen. We are not in any great degree a champagne-drinking people, yet a learned counsel, on the trial just alluded to, maintained that there is more of this particular wine consumed in England in one day, than is produced in all France in the course of twenty years. This is only another mode of telling us that we don't get the real article, but of course we all know that; yet it is made a point of honour in some countries to stand up for the genuineness of the champagne they consume. In the Pall Mall clubs, it would be rank heresy to

hint a doubt of the sparkling vintage. Russians will swear that out of the capital of the czars on the Neva, you have but very little chance of ever tasting the genuine product of the champagne vineyards. In California, they are quite convinced that they have the very best of undoubted Moët and Chandon; while the New Yorkers would think a man mad who could dream of questioning the fact, that the only real *Veuve Clicquot* is to be had at Delmonico's. All cannot be right in asserting that they alone have a monopoly of the drink so much in repute, though we think there can be no doubt that the Russian has the best chance of tasting the genuine article. It is stated on good authority, that, with the exception of what is retained by the French court for its own use, and for sending as presents to crowned heads, there is a standing agreement, that all that is left of the celebrated *Clicquot* vintage shall be sent to the Russian government. How the rest of the world is supplied with its champagne, only a small portion of the world really knows. Germany supplies a large portion of what is sold as the best champagne; and Moselle wine deprived of the peculiar flavour of the muscatel grape, from which it is made, constitutes an excellent sparkling drink, such as may very well satisfy those who have no chance of ever seeing a bottle of unimpeachable champagne decanted. But champagne may be made of almost any beverage that will ferment and effervesce, and, in fact, we rather fear it is made of any and every liquid that can be got to bubble and sparkle for the period demanded in the drinking of it. Sugar-candy, carbonate of soda, and the requisite colourings and flavourings, play their part in the sophisticating of the desiderated drink. From gooseberry, from mangold-wurzel, and from rhubarb, good champagne may be concocted; cider, perry, mead, maple syrup, and even spruce-beer, have been used, and used largely, in the manufacture. There is no occasion for the rhubarb used in the making of champagne being fresh, for excellent judges have owned that they have been deceived with a wine of this description made from very stale rhubarb. If proper skill is displayed in the flavouring, and needful care bestowed upon the racking, we really do not see how the general public can be expected to judge accurately of what they are drinking, when connoisseurs are compelled to own that they are deceived. That tinfoil, pink tissue-paper, and neat but showy labels, have much to do in recommending champagne, is a fact the dealer knows well, if he does not acknowledge it. Let an honest man try to vend race-course champagne in ginger-beer bottles at a moderate profit on his outlay, and it is very doubtful indeed if he could persuade the public to give him more than the price of ginger-beer for it.

It is comforting to know, amid so many proofs of the false character of the wines in common consumption, that a really sound, true, and wholesome wine may be had at a price far below the costly adulterations now patronised by the public. The best medical testimony concurs in telling us that no better beverage can be consumed than the light clarets of France; and France is prepared to supply us with an unlimited quantity of sound claret, at a price that almost precludes adulteration. The British public, it is true, has to re-acquire its taste for this wine, but, judging by

the rapid increase in the quantity imported since the treaty of commerce, we are not without hope that we shall one day change wine as it is for wine as it ought to be.

THE GREAT CATHEDRAL WINDOW.

AN OLD LEGEND.

THE great west window was framed and done;
How proud was its painter, Father John!
The watchings by night at the furnace-door,
The long days' ponderings, all were o'er;
The fires were quenched, and the fluxes and paints,
The tracings of monarchs, and prophets, and saints,
Were rolled and labelled, and hid away,
And life for Friar John was all holiday;
His brushes were thrown in the nettle croft,
And so was the palette he'd used so oft.

But when he saw that shining rood
Glow like sunset seen through a wood,
There rose in his soul a wicked pride,
And his heart beat quick with a fuller tide,
Nor thought Friar John, as his work he eyed,
If God in that work was glorified.

The window was a wondrous thing,
Blooming with an eternal spring
Of jewel colours and precious dyes,
Deep and rich as the western skies
At summer sunsets, and hues of flowers
That start up purple after the showers—
The rose's crimson and iris bloom;
Sunny lustres and topaz gloom,
Such as the depths of the forest hide;
Lapis, sapphire for martyr's robe;
Scarlet for Herod's fiery pride;
Ruby for Michael's flaming sword;
Golden splendour for crown and globe
Of David, the chosen of the Lord;
Amethyst, emerald, peacock's dyes,
Encircling a pale sad face,
A glory lighting it shed from skies
That shone like God's own dwelling-place:
And all these burned and melted so,
That there was within a kingly glow,
A pulse of light, a life-blood flowing,
Its varied colours ever shewing.

What wonder, then, that as he gazed,
As in a mirror, he saw upraised
The veil that hides the spirit-world,
And the dim curtain slowly furled,
Shewing behind that crystal wall,
Fiends that danced and mocked at his fall,
And monsters beaked, and fanged, and horned,
Goblins that him and his glass saints scorned,
And sneering Satan above them all.

But Friar John prayed loud and long,
And chanted many a holy song,
And read his vesper service through,
Ave and Pater not a few,
Till heaven opened, and angel and saint
Came to comfort that sinner faint
With prayer and vigil; and now again,
With purer eye and calmer brain,
He looked, and through the coloured screen
That parted earth from heaven's serene,
He saw, through flushes of rainbow dyes,
The jewelled gates of Paradise.

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